

EUROPE AND EURASIA

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

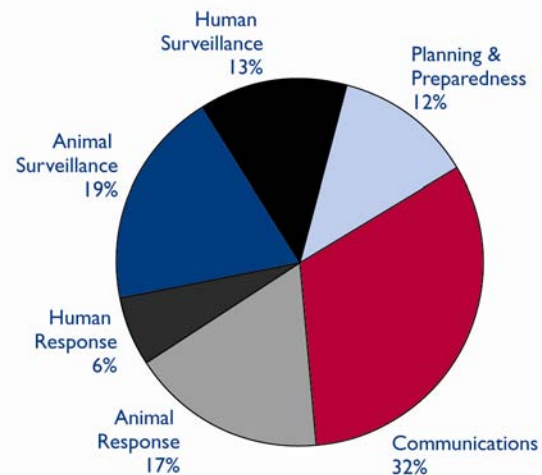
Europe and Eurasia's first outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in birds occurred in Russia in July 2005. Since that time, H5N1 outbreaks have affected wild birds as well as backyard domestic and commercially raised poultry in over 15 countries in the region. Human infections with H5N1 have so far been confirmed in two countries in the region: Azerbaijan, which has reported eight confirmed human cases resulting in five deaths, and Turkey, which has reported 12 human cases resulting in four deaths.

The Europe and Eurasia region has taken significant steps toward strengthening infrastructure and opportunities for economic growth. Uncontrolled, the H5N1 avian influenza virus would likely overwhelm governmental systems and derail this progress. During the 2005-2006 outbreaks in Azerbaijan and Turkey alone, over a million domestic birds were culled, resulting in significant economic losses.

As the virus began to spread from Southeast Asia in 2005 to Europe and Eurasia, USAID took strategic steps toward advancing preparedness and response capacity on regional and national levels. To date, USAID has allocated \$18.8 million for avian influenza activities in the region; this includes \$2.1 million and \$620,000, respectively, for the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

USAID is providing support in Europe and Eurasia to strengthen planning and preparedness, communications and public awareness, disease surveillance and detection, and response and containment. Efforts in these areas have yielded considerable progress toward avian and pandemic influenza preparedness and response capacity in the region. The accompanying chart illustrates the distribution of USAID resources.

**EUROPE AND EURASIA:
AVIAN INFLUENZA FOCUS BY ACTIVITY**



INTERVENTIONS AND IMPACT

Much of the geographic spread of the disease in Europe and Eurasia has been attributed to migrating birds, though experts suspect commercial trade of infected poultry also plays a significant role. Of particular concern during the 2005-2006 outbreaks was the rapidity with which the virus spread across the region, underscoring the lack of adequate biosecurity among poultry farms in the region, principally the small "backyard" farms.

USAID is focusing its efforts in the region on promoting increased awareness in both the commercial and backyard poultry sectors to protect economic progress and to promote outbreak prevention strategies. USAID is also working on regional and national levels to increase preparedness and coordination both within and among nations in the region. Activities include:

- Engaging the commercial poultry industry in Armenia, Georgia, and Romania to address HPAI by recognizing the role of the industry in taking accountability for biosecurity and surveillance within the commercial sector and in providing technical leadership to help educate the public

about avian influenza and how to reduce the risk of infection.

- Supporting a national campaign in Ukraine emphasizing safe poultry-rearing practices and behaviors that reduce risks.
- Strengthening disease control measures in Ukraine by supporting community-based surveillance, resulting in more timely and accurate reporting.
- Supporting national preparedness and strategy development in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine.
- Conducting tabletop simulations through FAO and WHO in Armenia and through FAO in Central Asia to bolster capacity for policymakers across multiple sectors to enhance communications and to coordinate roles, responsibilities, and actions in case of avian influenza outbreaks.
- Training 205 mayors from 38 of the 41 counties in Romania about avian influenza and its risks to support related decision-making and public discussion.



A flier used for USAID's avian influenza awareness activities in Ukraine. USAID is also providing support to train journalists in Ukraine, which has experienced outbreaks in birds, about how to accurately report on the disease.

USAID ASSISTANCE FOR AVIAN INFLUENZA PROGRAMS IN EUROPE AND EURASIA

Bilateral assistance	\$16.5 million
Regional assistance programs	\$2.3 million
Total USAID support of avian influenza programs in Europe and Eurasia	\$18.8 million

- Bolstering human health surveillance, development of infection control protocols, in-country coordination, and preparedness activities through WHO in Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Russia.
- Supporting sub-regional coordination, which included support for a joint WHO and FAO conference in Turkey bringing together technical and operational-level delegations from Ministries of Health and Agriculture from Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. The conference focused on avian influenza preparedness and promotion of cross-border collaboration, information sharing, and improved coordination on regional HPAI activities.

USAID has provided support to raise awareness in several countries in the Europe and Eurasia region, helping reduce risk for disease transmission. Activities include:

- Launching communications activities in 11 countries in Central and Eastern Europe in addition to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.
- Generating guidelines for teachers in Romania about avian influenza and its risks.
- Training journalists to more accurately report on avian influenza in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Romania and Ukraine.

To ensure countries have diagnostic and outbreak response capacity, USAID has provided trainings, equipment, and commodities in Europe and Eurasia. In addition to supporting response capacity, these efforts also bolster outbreak readiness and planning. Related USAID activities in the Europe and Eurasia region include the following:

- Sending 15,700 sets of personal protective equipment (PPE) to the region for use in animal and human disease surveillance and outbreak response.
- Providing training for 76 trainers in Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania for the safe and effective use of PPE and non-medical commodities for outbreak surveillance, investigation, and response. Several of these trainers also received certification in international shipping standards and are qualified to package and ship samples to international reference laboratories for disease confirmation.
- Conducting training programs for rapid response and laboratory testing in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- Training public health officials, veterinarians, epidemiologists, and laboratory diagnosticians in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Armenia, Albania, and Macedonia on surveillance methodology, virus detection,

diagnostic technologies, and sample-shipping procedures.

- Delivering laboratory and diagnostic equipment including rapid diagnostic test kits, viral detection systems, and associated supplies to Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Macedonia, Romania, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine.
- Training 435 federal and private veterinarians in Bulgaria on the essentials of outbreak control over a two-week, national-scale course organized with international partners and the Bulgarian government.
- Collaborating with WHO and Russia's Ministries of Health and Agriculture to support concentrated training in biosafety, diagnosis, sampling, case scenarios, and handling of specimens, and supporting improved surveillance in all laboratory categories throughout the country.